

 

Dual-Credit (DC) Education Programs in Texas: Interim Findings

Trey Miller, RAND
Holly Kosiewicz, THECB
Elaine Wang, RAND
Liz Marwah, Gibson Consulting
Scott Delhommer, CFAT
Lindsay Daugherty, RAND

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Agenda

- **What is the potential promise of DC education programs?**
- **How do we assess DC education in Texas?**
- **What did we find in Phase I of our study?**

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What are DC Programs?



DC programs allow high school students to take college-level courses that simultaneously provide credit toward high school and college degree

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Proponents Say, DC Programs . . .

- Acclimate students to college expectations and climate
- Provide academically challenging curriculum
- Align curriculum and standards
- Lower costs and reduce time to degree



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Critics Say, DC Programs Are . . .

- Academically less rigorous than college-level courses
- Inefficient use of public resources
- Inaccessible to traditionally underserved students



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National Research Is Promising but Lacking in Many Ways

Research generally finds DC programs positively impact student outcomes

BUT

Most studies are qualitative or descriptive

Causal evidence on impact of Early College High Schools in TX and NC

BUT

Focus on short-term outcomes

Some evidence mostly on short-term student outcomes

BUT

Lack of evidence on implementation, efficiency, costs

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Why Study DC Education in Texas?

- Passage of HB 505 in 2015 was a major shift in DC policy
 - Removed limitations on number of DC courses a student may take during high school, in any given academic year, and in 9th and 10th grades
 - Allowed high schools to partner with institutions outside of their service area to deliver DC
- Need for policymakers to ensure DC programs remain effective and efficient
 - Rapid growth in DC courses delivered
 - Changing approaches to delivering DC education
 - Heightened concerns about rigor, efficiency, and costs

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Initial Phase of Two-Year Study Focused on Answering Four Questions

- What institutional policies and practices shape how institutions advise DC students, teach DC courses, and determine student eligibility for DC courses?
- How have DC participation rates among different student groups and DC course delivery changed over time?
- What are the academic outcomes of high school students who took DC courses versus those who did not?
- To what extent did high school students who took DC courses complete college more efficiently than students who never took DC courses?

Designed to provide timely info to 85th Texas Legislature

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Mixed Methods Study Draws on a Variety of Sources



- A review of academic and policy studies on DC education programs in U.S. and Texas



- Quantitative analyses of administrative data from THECB and TEA



- Semi-structured interviews of DC administrators at select community colleges

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- **What did we find in Phase I of our study?**

DC Participation Was Related to Better College Outcomes

- Higher grades in DC and follow-on courses in the same subject
- Higher college enrollment rates after high school
 - More likely to enroll at a four-year institution
 - Less likely to require developmental education
- Higher college persistence and completion rates

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Little Evidence That Taking DC Courses Was Less Efficient Than Taking College-Credit Only Courses

- Relative to native college students, students who took DC courses:
 - Took less time to complete college degrees
 - Completed their degrees with roughly the same number of semester credit hours
- Little incidence of students who retook DC courses once they enrolled in college
 - Most observed retake was related to poor performance in the DC course

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DC Eligibility Rules that Promoted Success Came at the Expense of Limiting Access

- Wide disparities in DC participation rates by race / ethnicity, income, urbanicity, and academic background
- Disparities increased between 2000 and 2015
- DC administrators reported strong adherence to DC eligibility criteria
 - Many reported using stricter TSI-based college readiness standards
 - Many reported that HS guidance counselors often applied additional prerequisites that further limited access

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Instruction and Advising Differed Across HEIs

- State policy mandates common learning objectives for all lower division courses
 - DC administrators reported use of common syllabi and departmental oversight of instruction and assessment
- Guidelines by the regional accrediting body set minimum qualifications for college instructors
 - There were differences in context and instructor characteristics between DC and college-credit only courses
- DC administrators reported significant variance in advising practices across DC programs

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We Will Address Remaining Questions in the Second Phase of the Study

- Assess how institutions have responded to HB 505
- Conduct causal impact study to examine effects of DC programs on student outcomes
- Investigate rigor of instruction and assessment of student work in DC credit courses and college-credit-only courses
- Examine advising approaches across different delivery models
- Calculate the cost of DC education to the state and to students

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Recommendation—Wait and See



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Next Steps

- March 17: Release of draft Interim Report
 - Available on THECB website
- March 17 – April 17: Public comment
 - Send comments to donna_white@rand.org
- August 2017: Publication of Interim Report
 - URL will be provided on THECB website
- May 2017: Begin research to address second phase research questions

Questions? Contact the PI, Trey Miller, at tmiller@rand.org or (310)-503-5364

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